When I was interviewing for the position of Caleb T. Winchester University Librarian, I was informed that the CTW Consortium (Connecticut College, Trinity and Wesleyan) was looking into purchasing a new and improved Integrated Library System (ILS) or, as most people know it, an online catalog system. The ILS solution was chosen just before I arrived on campus last summer. And now that new ILS will launch on June 30, 2017.

The idea of switching catalog systems is not new to me. I don’t think I’ve ever had a position in a library where this hasn’t happened at least once. After all, technology and needs change. However, this is very big news for Wesleyan and our consortia libraries.

Our previous ILS was purchased in 2003. It is far enough behind the times that we needed something better. For example, many of our growing online and digital collections cannot be searched in our current ILS, but rather must be searched through separate tasks. There is no easy link to finding everything you need in one place. Neither could our Library team seamlessly manage the many backend tasks of our system: acquisitions, cataloging, serials, reserves, binding, ILL, and so forth. Both sides of our ILS had calcified into a stagnant solution that could not be improved or updated.

The new ILS solution will retain the same name as our previous one, OneSearch, but will bring so much more to the user. It will provide more intuitive searching and retrieval capabilities. It will better integrate a variety of materials and formats including electronic resources and campus collections. And it will streamline library operations, including circulation, reserves, acquisitions, and cataloging.

Most importantly, the new OneSearch will be modular and flexible, so that we can improve upon it as we grow and needs at Wesleyan may change. My biggest praise comes not for the system, but for all the members of my Library team who have worked endlessly to ensure that this switch over is as seamless as possible to all our users. This year-long endeavor had our entire group ensuring every aspect of our current collection moved over to the new OneSearch. It is a massive effort, and I am so very proud of all of them.

You won’t need to prepare anything for this changeover. It will be a different interface, but one that you can customize and limit your searches as narrowly or broadly as you wish. The new ILS will already contain our classic catalog (and CTW collections), but also all our online solutions such as WesScholar, SharedShelf, Hathi Trust, Special Collections & Archives, our growing digital initiatives, and our serials and databases.

Our next planned phase is to get all of the non-Library Wesleyan material into the discovery layer: the Archaeology Collection, Davison Print Collection, the Peoples Museum, the Mansfield Freeman Center, the Musical Instrument Collection, just to name a few. The goal of OneSearch is to truly make the one stop shop for all Wesleyan resources.

— DAN CHERUBIN, CALEB T. WINCHESTER UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN —

DIGITAL LAB EXPANDS CAPABILITIES

With the generous support of the Friends of the Library and Caleb T. Winchester University Librarian Daniel Cherubin, the library is purchasing additional equipment for the Digital Lab at Olin Library. The purchase builds capacity in the Digital Lab by adding the ability to digitize transmissive objects. Transmissive objects require light to pass through them in order to be visible to the eye, for example, 35mm negatives, slides, and glass plates.

The new equipment includes an additional Boxlite lamp that will work in conjunction with the strobe lights already in use in the lab, a transparent working surface (allowing light to pass through from the new Boxlite below), mounts to hold original objects, a new Rodenstock 75mm lens, and related accessories.

Once the equipment is in place and staff have been trained to work with it, the lab will begin to incorporate digitization of original transmissive objects from Special Collections & Archives, particularly from the University Photographer’s Collection. Digitizing original film negatives from this collection will provide access to visual evidence of campus life and events from the late 1950s through 2006. Over time, we hope to work with other departments around campus to digitize rare and unique transmissive objects from their own collections.

The Digital Lab has been in operation for over a year and has digitized materials from six collections, including one scrapbook (1910–1914), approximately 1,000 postcards, annual reports covering the early years of the university, myriad correspondence, and completed surveys documenting World War I service records of Wesleyan students and alumni. This purchase expands the type of information and the collections that the library can make available online for library patrons near and far by enhancing our ability to digitize a wider array of materials. Next steps for the lab, as funding permits, include adding equipment that will allow us to do field photography when objects can’t be transported to the lab, as well as equipment to capture the three-dimensionality of objects when appropriate.

— FRANCESCA LIVIERO, DIGITAL PROJECTS LIBRARIAN —
QUEER LIFE, QUEER STUDIES: HIGHLIGHTS FROM SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES

Offering a glimpse at the rich and complex history of LGBTQ life at Wesleyan and beyond, this exhibit in Olin Library showcases archival materials, artists’ books, periodicals, publications by faculty and alumni, rare books, textiles, and more. The opening case, “Reading Before Stonewall,” includes fiction and non-fiction published before 1969, when queer people resisted a police raid at the Stonewall Inn, a New York City bar. Throughout Stonewall is often presented as the beginning of the movement for gay and lesbian civil rights, in fact, there had been an active “homophile” movement in the United States and Europe since the late 19th century. Early publications are complemented by Wesleyan archival materials that predate Stonewall, including samples of the voluminous, many-year correspondence between English professor Fred Millert and John Fall, a librarian at the New York Public Library. The central case on queer art will feature a selection of objects that can be traced back to Wesleyan in the 1970s through early 2000s. From an advertisement for the first meeting of Wesleyan’s chapter of the Gay Liberation Front in October 1970 to a snapshot of the Queerleaders’ performance at a 2012 football game, queer student life at Wes is documented through artifacts, ephemera, and images. Many of these items are part of the Queer Archives Project research conducted by Nora Houssian and funded by SCAA. The push by Wesleyan students and faculty for a program in queer studies is highlighted in the final case along with a selection of publications by alumni and faculty. Also featured in Queer Life, Queer Studies are the Queer Periodicals Collection (QPC) and queer artists’ books. The QPC documents the tremendous variety of publishing happening in its heyday before the internet became ubiquitous. Activist, lifestyle, organizational, regional, and sex-positive publications are all part of the collection, as are many that are aimed almost exclusively at the audience. Purchased as a lot in the early 2000s, these gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender periodicals (and some less easily categorized) come from most of the 50 states, as well as 20 countries in addition to the United States. The collection includes nearly 500 different titles, most published between 1966 and the late 1990s. While some titles are represented by a single issue, many others are significant runs. Queer artists’ books by Karen Chance, Laura Davidson, Lee Krist, Scott McCarney, and Jeffrey Morin round out the exhibit.

QUEER PAST, QUEER FUTURE

On March 3, the Friends of the Wesleyan Library hosted alumni Alexander Chee ’89 and Jennifer Finney Boylan ’80 to read their work to share their experiences as queer undergraduates at Wesleyan in the 1970s and 1980s, and to discuss their ideas for (and queer futures) in the United States and abroad. The Smith Reading Room in Olin Library was packed with students, faculty, staff, and members of the Middletown community. Chee read from his first novel, Edinburgh, which takes place partly in the Edinburgh community. Chee and Boylan read from their first novels, The Queen of the Night (2001), which takes place partly in Berlin, and To Be Given in Good Faith, respectively. The audience included nearly 500 different titles, most published between 1966 and the late 1990s. While some titles are represented by a single issue, many others are significant runs. Queer artists’ books by Karen Chance, Laura Davidson, Lee Krist, Scott McCarney, and Jeffrey Morin round out the exhibit.

Delta Delta Phi Records

Last September it was granted the opportunity to process the records of the Middletown Chapter of the Delta Delta Phi Society, which currently are on deposit with Special Collections & Archives. The project, funded by ADP alumni — Adelphic Literary Society and the Adelphic Educational Fund — includes arranging and rehousing the material, flagging damaged items for repair, developing a finding aid for the records described at the folder level, making the finding aid available online, and selecting items of interest to present in an exhibit to tell the story of the Middletown ADP chapter founded at Wesleyan in 1856. In order to balance the privacy of current and alumni members with access for research, only materials after 1990 and donor permissions from the present will be publicly available. The wide range of records that have been collected and preserved over time by ADP members make up more than 200 boxes of materials, including correspondence, meeting minutes, membership records, student newspapers, financial records, drawings, photographs, clippings, publications, songbooks, and more. This collection may be a source of research for the obvious topics, such as fraternity and society life and songs of ADP, but it can also be a source for non-obvious research topics, such as eating clubs, early 20th-century buildings, or literary events on campus. Either way, this collection will provide an array of material for researchers at Olin’s Special Collections & Archives. It has been my pleasure to work with the records of this intellectual, respectful, determined, fair, inclusive, and witty group.

The collection is the result of the efforts of the members of Delta Delta Phi, an organization that was founded at Wesleyan in 1856. The chapter is named in honor of the Greek letters “ΔΔΦ,” which stand for “Doxa Delta Phi,” or “Glory, Delta, Phi.” The fraternity was founded at Wesleyan in 1856 by a group of students who were interested in the study of Greek and Latin literature, as well as the study of philosophy and religion. The fraternity was the first to be established at the university, and it was the first to be granted recognition by the university administration. The fraternity was dissolved in 1859, but it was re-established in 1863.

This collection consists of records from the late 19th to the 20th century, including materials related to the fraternity’s history, membership, activities, and events. The materials include correspondence, meeting minutes, membership records, student newspapers, financial records, drawings, photographs, clippings, publications, songbooks, and more. This collection may be a source of research for the obvious topics, such as fraternity and society life and songs of ADP, but it can also be a source for non-obvious research topics, such as eating clubs, early 20th-century buildings, or literary events on campus. Either way, this collection will provide an array of material for researchers at Olin’s Special Collections & Archives. It has been my pleasure to work with the records of this intellectual, respectful, determined, fair, inclusive, and witty group.

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